



During World War II Florence suffered some damage as the retreating Germans blew up the City's bridges, all except the Ponte Vecchio.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Florence

1 Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore is the second largest cathedral in the world, capable of holding 3,000 people, it also boasts a cupola larger than that of; the Pantheon, St. Peter's in Rome and St. Paul's in London. Begun in 1296, built in gothic style, it took 140 years to complete. Climb the 463 steps to the Cupola Gallery for a panoramic view of the City.

2 Bell Tower, a free-standing tower adjacent to the Cathedral, stands 292 feet high and dates from the 14th century. The Tower is reputed to be one of the most beautiful in the world, decorated in colored marble. 414 steps take you to the top, for a fine view of the City.

3 Baptistry, an octagonal structure built in the 11th century, in romanescque style, contains many mosaics dating from the 13th and 14th centuries. It is famous for its three bronze gates on the east-side, designed by Ghiberti and referred to by Michelangelo as the 'Gates of Paradise', (the originals are now housed in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo close-by).

4 Museo dell'Opera del Duomo contains some superb sculptures, including Michelangelo's unfinished Pieta, intended for his tomb.

5 Piazza della Signoria is the City's largest square and represents the historical and commercial center. The Neptune Fountain can be found here, and the side-walk cafes attract Florentines and tourists alike.

6 Palazzo della Signoria (Palazzo Vecchio) dominates the Piazza, with a copy of Michelangelo's statue of David adorning the stairway, (the original is now in the Accademia Museum). Completed in

1314, the Palace later became the seat of the City's Government and is today the City Hall, containing many frescoes and significant works of art. **Loggia della Signoria** also in the Piazza of the same name, houses the bronze statuary; 'Perseus' by Cellini and the 'Rape of the Sabines' by Giambologna. (Always Open.)

7 Uffizi Gallery, located just off Piazza della Signoria, once the administrative offices of the Medici rule, now contains Italy's most important art collection, including gothic and renaissance works by such famous masters as; Giotto, Botticelli, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and Rubens.

8 Accademia Gallery can be found on Via Ricasoli and contains some of Michelangelo's most important sculptures, including the 'Statue of David'.

9 Pitti Palace was once the Grand Ducal and Medici residence and the Royal Palace of united Italy from 1865 – 1870, when Florence enjoyed brief recognition as the country's capital city. It now comprises a number of museums including; Museo degli Argenti which exhibits the Medici family's collection of gold, silver, jewels and cameos, Gallery of Modern Art, and the Palatine Gallery which contains a collection of priceless paintings. **Boboli Gardens**, also located at the Pitti Palace, features 10 acres of ornate Italian gardens.

10 Church of San Lorenzo, just off Piazza San Lorenzo, is of renaissance design and contains two sacristies, an early one designed by Brunelleschi and a newer one, the interior of which was decorated by Michelangelo and includes several of his sculptures. **Medici Chapels**, situated just behind the Church of San Lorenzo, contain the tombs of almost the entire Medici family.

11 Santa Croce, located on Piazza Santa Croce, was begun in 1294 and built in gothic style. It now contains the tombs of some of Italy's greatest citizens including; Michelangelo, Galileo, Ghiberti and Machiavelli. The adjacent museum contains various frescoes and statues taken from the church.

12 Bargello Palace – This austere looking fortress was once the seat of Magistrates and later became a prison. It now contains the National Museum and is considered on a par with the Uffizi Museum, exhibiting many fine Italian renaissance sculptures by such masters as; Michelangelo, Verrocchio and Donatello.

13 Ponte Vecchio is the oldest bridge remaining in Florence, lined with goldsmiths' shops, it appears to be a normal street until reaching the middle where the River Arno can be seen flowing beneath.

Pisa

Leaning Tower, located at Piazza del Duomo in the Compo dei Miracoli, was begun in 1172, however, having only completed three of the six stories planned, building was abandoned due to the fact that it was leaning. The Tower was completed in the mid-14th century. Standing 180 feet high, built of white marble, it now leans a total of 14 feet from the perpendicular and continues to move at the rate of 1/4" per year.

Cathedral, also located at Piazza del Duomo, was built in 1063 in a simple geometric design. The cavernous interior is supported by 68 columns and it contains some beautiful mosaics.

Baptistry, next to the Tower and Cathedral, was begun in 1152, but not completed until 1284.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Livorno, Pisa, and Florence we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Most items have fixed prices, but it may be possible to get a discount on a large purchase. It is normal to bargain at markets, except for food items.

Tipping: Generally a 15% service charge is added to restaurant bills, however, as this amount doesn't all go to the waiter, it is normal to offer a 5% tip to the waiter in addition to any service charge. For taxi drivers, a 5 – 10% tip is acceptable.

Local Cuisine: Pasta is most widely associated with Italian cuisine and there are many different types of pasta as well as sauces to accompany them. Try Fazzoletti, pasta filled with ricotta cheese and spinach. Some Tuscan specialties include; Ribollita, which is a variation on Minestrone, Pappardelle – broad noodles, Stracotto, a beef stew with beans, and Bistecca alla Fiorentina, a charcoal grilled T-Bone steak marinated in olive oil and black pepper.

Drink Specialties: Espresso and Capuccino coffees are very popular. It is common in Italian cafes to take a coffee standing at the bar and often there is no seating. Chianti is the most famous wine of Italy, but the region of Tuscany produces a number of very good quality wines. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING FACILITIES Shops are generally open from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm and 4:30 pm – 7:30 pm Monday thru Saturday. In Florence, some souvenir stores open on Sundays.

The Italians are renowned for their sense of dress and style, it is not surprising therefore, to find plenty of quality clothes stores and boutiques, particularly in Florence where the designer boutiques are to be found along Via de'Tornabuoni and Via della Vigna Nuova. Shops are also found on Via Calzaiuoli and Via del Corso. In Livorno the main shopping areas are to be found around Piazza Grande and Via Grande, approximately 1 mile from the Ship's berth.

Apart from clothing, quality leather products are also plentiful and considered good value for money. Mosaics and inlays are specialties, as are gold items which can be found in Florence around the Ponte Vecchio. For souvenirs check-out the Straw Market (Mercato Nuovo), also in Florence, located at Via Calimala.

Some tourist orientated stores may accept U.S. Dollars, most accept major credit cards.

Value Added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in this port of call is the euro. There are 8 euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euros, along with